

NEW ENGLAND NOTE

*CAREX AESTIVALIS* IN VERMONT

PETER F. ZIKA AND JERRY C. JENKINS

*Carex aestivalis* M. A. Curtis, the summer sedge, was discovered in Vermont in 1903, in dry limy woods along Broad Brook in South Pownal, Bennington Co. (Churchill, 1905). In 1904 a second Vermont station was located on Mt. Herrick, Ira, Rutland Co. (Carpenter s.n., VT). Despite the prolific sedge collecting of Flynn, Pringle, Brainerd, Ross, Knowlton, Atwood, Seymour and others, no additional stations for *C. aestivalis* were recorded after 1904 in Vermont.

In 1981 we encountered a population of about 1000 *Carex aestivalis* in limy, rocky woods on the east slope of Mt. Equinox, Manchester, Bennington Co. (Zika and Jenkins 3867, 3891, BEDF, NEBC, VT). The site is in Cook Hollow, at an elevation of 2300 feet. Most of the plants seen were fruiting in the first week of July. Summer sedge was shaded by *Acer saccharum* Marsh., and growing with *Agropyron trachycaulon* (Link) Malte ex H. F. Lewis, *Arabis canadensis* L., *Carex rosea* Schkuhr, *C. sparganioides* Muhl., *Festuca obtusa* Biehler, and a diverse community of other herbaceous plants. The bedrock was Ordovician limestone in the Bascom formation (Doll et al., 1961).

In 1989 a second population of summer sedge was located along the Long Trail, about one-quarter mile north of the Route 9 crossing in Woodford, Bennington Co. (Zika 10668, VT). About 30 widely scattered plants were seen, primarily in a sunny area of recent blowdowns, but also in the forest upslope. The bedrock was Precambrian gneiss in the Mt. Holly complex (Doll et al., 1961). The population was centered at an elevation of roughly 1500 feet on the south-facing slope of Maple Hill. The canopy was *Acer saccharum*, *Betula alleghanensis* Britt., *Fagus grandifolia* Ehrh., and *Fraxinus americana* L.; associated species included *Carex brunnescens* (Pers.) Poir., *C. communis* Bailey, *C. deweyana* Schwein., *C. debilis* Michx., *C. intumescens* Rudge, and *Viola canadensis* L.

The writers have unsuccessfully attempted several times to locate Churchill's station; whether Carpenter's colony is still extant is not known.

While summer sedge is certainly rare in Vermont, we do not believe the species is threatened or endangered, and do not recommend it for legal protection under state law (10 V. S. A., Chapter 123) at this time. We believe "special concern" status is more appropriate. "Special concern" is a category without legal status, created by the Vermont Endangered Species Committee for species requiring more study before listing as threatened or endangered. *Carex aestivalis* is an inconspicuous species that may have been overlooked in southwestern Vermont in limy woods. It is superficially similar to *C. gracillima* Schwein. and *C. arctata* Boott ex Hook., common woodland species. More field work is needed to determine the status of summer sedge in Vermont. South of Vermont *C. aestivalis* is widespread.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- CHURCHILL, J. R. 1905. Three plants new to the flora of Vermont. *Rhodora* 7: 99-100.
- DOLL, C. G., W. M. CODY, J. B. THOMPSON, JR. AND M. P. BILLINGS. 1961. Centennial Geologic Map of Vermont. Vermont Geologic Survey, Montpelier.

P. F. Z.

NEW YORK NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM  
WILDLIFE RESOURCES CENTER  
DELMAR, NY 12054

J. C. J.

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
WILLIAMS COLLEGE  
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA 01267